

Breast Screening



1 out of 9 women will get breast cancer.



You are more likely to get breast cancer if you are over 50 years of age.



If you are aged 50–70 years of age, you should get your breasts checked in the NHS Breast Screening Programme.

Depending where you live you may be invited to get your breasts checked when you are slightly younger than 50.



The NHS Breast Screening Programme will check your breasts every 3 years.



Breast screening uses a type of X-ray (**mammography**) to look for small changes inside the breast.

X-rays are used to see inside someone.



It can show small changes in your breasts before any other signs of breast cancer show.



If breast cancer is found at an early stage, you have a better chance of treatment working, and living for longer.

Surgery that can treat breast cancer also has a better chance of working if it is done as early as possible.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

What Are the Good Points of Breast Screening?



Breast screening can save lives



Breast screening means that more people can have treatment that helps deal with breast cancer.



The screening programme means that about 1400 women in England each year find out they have breast cancer, and can be treated.



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What Are the Bad Points of Breast Screening?



- In a few cases, people are accidentally told that they have breast cancer when they do not.



- This could mean that people have extra tests or surgery when they do not really need treatment.



- In some cases, the breast cancer is missed in the screening.



- The mammogram can be painful or uncomfortable.



- A person can feel worried and upset that they may have breast cancer.



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What Information Will You Get About Breast Screening?



You will get an invitation in the post to have your breasts screened (checked for cancer) for the first time when you are between 47-53 years of age.

You will get further invitations to have your breasts screened every 3 years until you are between 70-73 years of age.



It will give you a date, time and place for the screening.



If you cannot go on that date, time or place, phone the screening place to change it.

Their telephone number will be on the letter.



Screening is done using mammography (X-rays) of each breast.



The screening unit may be:



- A van that moves around.



- At a hospital.



- In a set place in your local area like a shopping centre.



Your visit to the screening unit will be short, and should last about 30 minutes (half an hour).



You will need to take off the clothes that you are wearing on your chest (including your bra, if you wear one).



Each breast is placed on the machine, one at a time.

It is then pressed gently but strongly on a flat, clear, plastic plate.



Some women may find this uncomfortable and even painful.

This is because the breasts are held strongly in position and pressed.



This is done to get a good picture of each breast.



This uncomfortable feeling usually only lasts while your breast is being held in that position.

A very small number of women have pain for some time afterwards.



On the day of breast screening, you should not put on spray-on deodorant or talcum powder.

This is because the mammogram will not work as well.



If you have fake breasts you can still have your breasts screened, but you will probably have to go to the hospital for this.



Your results should arrive within 2 weeks by post.

If not, you can telephone the screening unit for your results.



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Who Can Take Part in Screening for Breast Cancer?



All women who are 50-70 years of age.



Depending where you live you may be invited to take part in screening up to 3 years before you are 50.



Women who have a higher chance of having breast cancer (your doctor will tell you this).



You may not get an invitation as soon as you turn 50, but you should get it by the time you are 53.



You should have your breasts screened every 3 years.



The breast screening service can give you extra help if you have a learning disability or a physical disability.



More information can be found at www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk.



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